

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ALEXANDRIA 0364

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, EG
SUBJ: MISR PARTY OFFICIAL COMMENTS ON GUMRUK BY-ELECTION

REF: ALEXANDRIA 0349

1. IN TALK WITH CONGEN MAY 13, DR. FAROUK GARZS RE
UPCOMING GUMRUK BY-ELECTION. HE SAID AHMAD IZZET, WAFD
CANDIDATE, WAS FROM MISR PARTY AND HAD ASKED TO BE DESIGNATED
CANDIDATE. MISR PARTY, HOWEVER, CHOSE MOHAMED DIAB FROM AMONG
FOUR OR FIVE NOMINEES INCLUDING IZZET, BECAUSE IT BELIEVED DIAB
HAD BETTER CHANCE OF WINNING ELECTION. AMONG OTHER THINGS,
DIAB HAD OBTAINED MORE VOTES THAN IZZET IN LAST ELECTION (WON
BY SHAIKH ASHOUR) WHEN BOTH DIAB AND IZZET WERE ALSO ON THE
BALLOT.

2. GARRANA SAID DIAB WAS A STRONG CANDIDATE AND HE BELIEVED
HE WOULD WIN. HE ADMITTED THAT DIAB HAD HAD SOME PROBLEMS WITH
LOCAL LEADERS INITIALLY, BUT THESE HAD BEEN RESOLVED AND HE WAS
GETTING STRONGER. ON OTHER HAND, WAFDISTS AND LEFTISTS STARTED
OFF STRONG AND WERE GETTING WEAKER.

3. GARRANA SAID "KHALED MUHI AL-DIN (LEFTIST) SPOKE AT A LOCAL
RALLY IN MAY". THEN, ON MAY 12 FOUAD SARAGEDDIN MADE A THREE-
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AND-A-HALF-HOUR SPEECH THAT VERY NEARLY SPARKED VIOLENCE
FROM MISR PARTY SUPPORTERS. GARRANA SAID HE AND THE GOVERNOR
WATCHED THE PROCEEDINGS CAREFULLY AND HE HAD HAD TO REMOVE
SOME OF HIS PEOPLE FROM THE AREA TO PREVENT AN INCIDENT.

4. ASKED ABOUT POSSIBLE VOTING IRREGULARITIES, GARRANA EXPLAINED
IN SOME DETAIL THE PROCEDURES THAT SHOULD ENSURE FAIR PLAY

AND PROTECTION OF BALLOT BOXES AND COUNTING. HE CONFIRMED, HOWEVER, THAT BALLOT BOXES WOULD BE REMOVED TO A CENTRAL LOCATION AFTER BEING SEALED AND SAID BALLOTS WOULD BE COUNTED IN THE PRESENCE OF CANDIDATES OR THEIR REPS. HE SAID ALSO THAT EACH CANDIDATE COULD APPOINT A REPRESENTATIVE TO WATCH EACH VOTING PLACE.

5. GARRANA ESTIMATED TOTAL VOTERS IN GUMRUK AT ABOUT 40,000 AND THOUGHT 20,000 OR SO WOULD VOTE, ALTHOUGH THE TURNOUT IS USUALLY LOWER. HE THOUGHT PARTY CANDIDATES WOULD GET MOST VOTES; HE ESTIMATED THAT MOHAMMED YUSUF, THE MOST POPULAR INDEPENDENT, WOULD GET ABOUT 800 OR SO VOTES, BUT THOUGHT OTHERS MIGHT GET NO MORE THAN 50.

6. COMMENT: GARRANA DID NOT MENTION WHETHER OR NOT PM MAMDOUH SALEM WAS IN ALEXANDRIA OVER THE WEEKEND, BUT SALEM REPORTEDLY ATTENDED PRAYERS IN THE MORSI ABU EL ABBAS MOSQUE ON FRIDAY, AND THERE ARE REPORTS THAT HE DID MAKE A SPEECH. ONE RUMOR SUGGESTS THAT SALEM WAS PREPARED TO SPEAK BUT THAT FEW PEOPLE TURNED OUT TO HEAR HIM. RUMOR GOES ON TO SAY THAT LARGE TURNOUT (BY CONTRAST) FOR FOUAD SARAGEDDIN AS AN ELEMENT BEHIND PRESIDENT SADAT'S MAY 14 ATTACK ON "LEFTIST SABOTEURS." (AKHBAR EL YOM OF 5/13/78 ALSO SPEAKS OF "EVENTS" WHICH OCCURRED AT AN ALEXANDRIA ELECTION RALLY THAT WERE "SAID TO THREATEN NATIONAL UNITY AND REPORTED TO BE CONTRARY TO THE PRINCIPLES OF DEMOCRACY".) CONFIDENTIAL

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7. REPORT RECEIVED BY CONGEN INDICATES THAT SARAGEDDIN WAS CAREFUL NOT TO CRITICIZE SADAT IN HIS SPEECH (AND EVEN SENT HIM A COPY) BUT HE DID CRITICIZE MAMHOUD SALEM AND THE GOVERNMENT AND COMPARED CONDITIONS IN EGYPT BEFORE AND AFTER 1952, INDICATING FORMER WERE BETTER. POLICE WERE PRESENT BUT DID NOT INTERFERE IN PROCEEDINGS AS THEY HAD AT LEFTIST RALLYS. SOME AMERICAN PRESS REPORTERS WERE ALSO REPORTED TO BE PRESENT. MCCLELLAND

NOTE BY OC/T: TELEGRAM DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

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